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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a follow-up survey of alumni (N=104) who had pursued degrees through the Education Department at Castleton State College (VT). The questionnaire was concerned with alumni perceptions regarding the attainment of outcome-based competencies. The quantitative data reported respondents' knowledge about subject matter and the learner, professional characteristics, planning, instructional methods, classroom environment and management, communications, and evaluation. A majority of alumni indicated that addressing specified competencies was the program's greatest strength. Program weaknesses were found in the areas of classroom management and student evaluation skills. Perceived strengths and weaknesses identified through the survey have been validated by faculty and changes are being incorporated into a 5-year development plan. Appendices provide the follow-up survey, a graphical comparison by weight score, reported strengths and weaknesses of the program, and reported suggestions. (LL)

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ED 367 619

An Analysis of Alumni Perceptions Towards Attainment of Outcome-Based Competencies in Teacher Education

A Special Report
Submitted in partial fulfillment
for the Vermont state accreditation process

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An Analysis of Alumni Perceptions Towards Attainment of Outcome-Based Competencies in Teacher Education: A Special Report

by David R. Murray, Ed.D., Department of Education

Introduction:

To obtain and maintain accreditation in the state of Vermont, the Vermont State Education Department (VSED) and the Vermont Colleges of Teacher Education (VCTE) request that aggregated data from follow-up surveys obtained from graduates be reviewed. The objective of this review is to identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Castleton State College Teacher Education Program. Further, the aggregated data will assist faculty in making improvements to better meet the needs of Castleton State College's future teacher education candidates. The survey data will identify and obtain general background information on respondents. In addition, general information related to respondents' perceptions on program course content and general exit outcomes will be included as an integral part of this report.

From approximately 300 alumni sent a questionnaire pertaining to their perceptions of their experiences while pursuing a degree through the Education Department at Castleton State College, 104 elected to return the survey. This represents approximately a 35% return rate. The alumni respondents represented graduates from the academic years of 1984-85 to 1992-93. However, the greater majority (59.62%), graduated in the last two years.

Demographic Profile:

A review of the aggregated data on general demographics found that the majority of the alumni responding to the survey were female. Fifty-four percent received graduate degrees, while 43% received either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree. Approximately three quarters of the alumni were focused on the elementary level, while 21% were focused on the secondary level. Therefore, as expected, the majority of respondents were elementary education majors. Other majors represented included curriculum and instruction, administration/educational leadership and general education. The fewest majors cited were in special education and reading/language arts. However, the highest endorsements cited were in these areas. Other endorsements sought were primarily for secondary subject areas. (Refer to Table 1, General Information: Demographic Profile.)

Table 1
General Information: Demographic Profile

Female	89	(85.58%)	Age:	21-30	46	(44.23%)
Male	15	(14.42%)		31-40	30	(28.85%)
				41-50	22	(21.15%)
				51-60	5	(4.81%)
				No answer	1	(0.96%)

General Information: Education Program Profile

Year of Graduation:					
1984-85	2	(1.92%)	1989-90	1	(0.96%)
1985-86	1	(0.96%)	1990-91	1	(0.96%)
1986-87	11	(10.58%)	1991-92	30	(28.85%)
1987-88	10	(9.62%)	1992-93	32	(30.77%)
1988-89	15	(14.42%)	No answer	1	(0.96%)
Program Enrolled in:					
Elementary	76	(73.08%)	Special Ed	1	(0.96%)
Secondary	22	(21.15%)	No answer	3	(2.88%)
K-12 (special areas)	2	(1.92%)			
Degree Awarded:					
BA	2	(1.92%)	CAGS	2	(1.92%)
BS	43	(41.35%)	No answer	3	(2.88%)
Masters	54	(51.92%)			
Major:					
Elementary	50	(48.08%)	Special Education	4	(3.85%)
Curriculum	21	(20.19%)	Reading/Lang Arts	3	(2.88%)
Admin/Leadership	12	(11.54%)	No answer	4	(3.85%)
Education	10	(9.62%)			
Endorsements:					
Reading	22	(21.15%)	Social Studies	3	(2.88%)
Special Education	15	(14.42%)	Library/Media	3	(2.88%)
Early Childhood	14	(13.46%)	K-12 (special area)	2	(1.92%)
Administration	7	(6.73%)	Spanish	2	(1.92%)
Math	5	(4.81%)	French	1	(0.96%)
Science	4	(3.85%)	Music	1	(0.96%)
Elementary	3	(2.88%)	Theatre Arts	1	(0.96%)
English/Lit	3	(2.88%)	No answer	18	(17.31%)

In terms of employment status, approximately 71% of those responding to the survey are currently teaching and plan to continue their career in education. Of this group, the average number of years of teaching experience was 7.44. However, 51% reported having less than 5 years of teaching experience. Approximately 26% of the former Castleton students responding to this questionnaire are not currently teaching. From this group, 16% still have a desire to enter the education profession. Ten percent indicated that they do not plan to teach. As

approximately 65% of the alumni who received the survey did not elect to return it, it may be deemed difficult to ascertain the actual employment status of the graduates. The decision not to participate in the survey may have been based on one's employment status. This non-response may have biased the population representation.

Of the alumni who are not teaching, 45% are employed in education related positions. These include such services as substitute teaching, daycare, state education department and alternative education programs. Twenty-four percent of the alumni are employed in non-professional positions, while others are homemakers, attending graduate school or currently seeking employment. (Refer to Table 2, General Information: Employment Profile.)

Table 2
General Information: Employment Profile

Employment Status:			Other Professions (those not teaching):		
Currently teaching	74	(71.15%)	Education Related	13	(44.83%)
Teaching but plan to stop	0	(0.00%)	Non-professional	7	(24.14%)
Have not taught, but plan to begin	17	(16.35%)	Homemaker	4	(13.79%)
Have taught, do not plan to return	5	(4.81%)	Seeking Employment	3	(10.34%)
Do not plan to teach	5	(4.81%)	Graduate School	2	(6.90%)
No answer	3	(2.88%)			
Years of Teaching Experience:					
.5-2	24	(30.77%)			
3 to 5	16	(20.51%)			
6 to 9	14	(17.95%)			
10 to 15	14	(17.95%)			
16 to 20	7	(8.97%)			
more than 20	3	(3.85%)			
Average years of experience	7.44				

Components of the Program:

The guiding principles that underline the Castleton State College Teacher Education Program are drawn from three major distinctive sources. These sources include, but are not necessarily limited to, the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators Quality Indicators, the General Vermont State Education Department Competency Requirements and the specific Castleton State College competency requirements. After reviewing all sources, the Castleton faculty perceived that both state education content and skills were embedded within the specific Castleton competency requirements and, therefore, focused the survey instrument upon these student outcomes.

Respondents to the survey were asked to indicate their general perceptions concerning the content of the Castleton State College Education Program as it related to the specific competency requirements. The specific Castleton State College competency areas include; (1) knowledge about subject matter and the learner; (2) personal and professional characteristics; (3) planning skills; (4) instructional methods; (5) classroom management skills; (6) general communications skills; and (7) skills in student assessment and evaluation.

Data Analysis:

An analysis of the data was conducted to review responses based on the response categories of: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD), not covered in coursework (NC). Data is presented in frequency form including percentages. In addition, a weighted score was generated using a scale of 0-4 to correspond to the response categories. In terms of analysis, competencies were deemed to be met when weighted scores were above 3.0. Scores between 2.5 and 3.0 were reviewed for possible oversights. Scores between 2.0 and 2.5 were examined as areas which might possibly require adjustment. Scores below 2.0 were examined as areas of concern for possible rectification. An analysis of the free response section of the questionnaire was reported in terms of cited strengths and weaknesses. Individual statements from the free response categories are listed at the end of the report.

Quantitative Findings:

Generally in areas of knowledge about subject matter and the learner, the respondents indicated that they received the basic foundations related to the historical and social perspectives of education and to the learning theories necessary to accommodate individual students in a diversified student body. Further they indicated that they were provided with an evolving knowledge of subject matter related to their teaching. Although the data indicated that knowledge about human development was covered, it may not have been strongly emphasized. In terms of articulating connections across varying disciplines, 17.65% of the respondents indicated this was not provided to any great extent. The addition of the new liberal arts major required for all teacher education graduates may, in the future, aid students in drawing the connections between various content areas. Finally, many respondents indicated that the opportunity to learn about cultural diversity was not covered in their studies. In recent years, a multi-cultural course was added which may help to overcome this deficiency. (Refer to Table 3, Knowledge About Subject Matter and the Learner.)

Table 3
Knowledge About Subject Matter and the Learner

Q#	SA	(%SA)	A	(%A)	D	(%D)	SD	(%SD)	NC	(%NC)	N	Wt. Score
1	32	(30.77%)	66	(63.46%)	2	(1.92%)	0	(0.00%)	4	(3.85%)	104	3.17
2	11	(10.78%)	66	(64.71%)	18	(17.65%)	4	(3.92%)	3	(2.94%)	102	2.76
3	11	(10.89%)	41	(40.59%)	27	(26.73%)	5	(4.95%)	17	(16.83%)	101	2.24
4	30	(29.13%)	67	(65.05%)	6	(5.83%)	0	(0.00%)	0	(0.00%)	103	3.23
5	35	(34.65%)	55	(54.46%)	8	(7.92%)	0	(0.00%)	3	(2.97%)	101	3.18
6	20	(19.42%)	71	(68.93%)	7	(6.80%)	1	(0.97%)	4	(3.88%)	103	2.99

*Question number corresponds with survey questions found in Appendix A

The alumni responding to the survey indicated that the Castleton Education Program taught them to work collaboratively and to effectively communicate through written and oral expression. They also indicated that the program taught them how to reflect upon their own teaching performance. Twenty four percent of the respondents suggested that the opportunity to participate in professional organizations was not afforded. Presently Castleton has a Student Teachers Association, a Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society chapter and sponsors an Educational Leadership Association to facilitate these requests. In addition, students are encouraged to join the state chapters of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development as well as the National Teacher's Association. (Refer to Table 4, Personal/Professional Characteristics.)

Table 4
Personal/Professional Characteristics

Q#	SA	(%SA)	A	(%A)	D	(%D)	SD	(%SD)	NC	(%NC)	N	Wt. Score
7	37	(35.58%)	58	(55.77%)	2	(1.92%)	3	(2.88%)	4	(3.85%)	104	3.16
8	41	(39.42%)	54	(51.92%)	6	(5.77%)	2	(1.92%)	1	(0.96%)	104	3.27
9	28	(26.92%)	61	(58.65%)	10	(9.62%)	2	(1.92%)	3	(2.88%)	104	3.05
10	32	(30.77%)	65	(62.50%)	5	(4.81%)	1	(0.96%)	1	(0.96%)	104	3.21
11	20	(19.61%)	57	(55.88%)	18	(17.65%)	1	(0.98%)	6	(5.88%)	102	2.82
12	35	(33.98%)	57	(55.34%)	8	(7.77%)	2	(1.94%)	1	(0.97%)	103	3.19

*Question number corresponds with survey questions found in Appendix A

Overall in the general area of curriculum development and lesson planning, it was reported that opportunities were provided for these skills to be met. The greater majority of respondents indicated that each skill listed was covered within the Program's curriculum. All skills received

a weighted score greater than 3.0 (based upon a 4.0 scale). In order of score received, the following skills were included: selecting and defining appropriate learning objectives, integrating a variety of learning materials to meet objectives, developing daily lesson plans and long range unit plans, constructing classroom materials, selecting and developing appropriate activities to meet specified objectives and learner levels, and planning activities and assignments which address various learner differences. (Refer to Table 5, Planning.)

Table 5
Planning

Q#	SA	(%SA)	A	(%A)	D	(%D)	SD	(%SD)	NC	(%NC)	N	Wt. Score
13	34	33.33%	60	58.82%	4	3.92%	2	1.96%	2	1.96%	102	3.20
14	26	26.00%	64	64.00%	6	6.00%	1	1.00%	3	3.00%	100	3.09
15	33	32.67%	56	55.45%	9	8.91%	0	0.00%	3	2.97%	101	3.15
16	35	34.65%	53	52.48%	7	6.93%	1	0.99%	5	4.95%	101	3.11
17	40	40.00%	49	49.00%	3	3.00%	1	1.00%	7	7.00%	100	3.14
18	29	29.59%	54	55.10%	11	11.22%	0	0.00%	4	4.08%	98	3.06

*Question number corresponds with survey questions found in Appendix A

Generally there was high agreement among the respondents regarding the area of instructional methods. Over 94% reported that the Castleton program offered opportunities in the development and use of a wide variety of instructional methods. Further, they were able to develop the skills necessary to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. The data also suggests that as students they were provided with skills to enable them to implement activities in a logical sequence and to use instructional aids in the delivery of a lesson. Finally, the majority of respondents indicated that the program enabled them to be able to match instructional methods with the needs of learners. (Refer to Table 6, Instructional Methods.)

Table 6
Instructional Methods

Q#	SA	(%SA)	A	(%A)	D	(%D)	SD	(%SD)	NC	(%NC)	N	Wt. Score
19	28	27.45%	68	66.67%	3	2.94%	1	0.98%	2	1.96%	102	3.17
20	27	26.47%	60	58.82%	12	11.76%	0	0.00%	3	2.94%	102	3.06
21	27	26.73%	64	63.37%	8	7.92%	0	0.00%	2	1.98%	101	3.13
22	29	29.00%	60	60.00%	8	8.00%	0	0.00%	3	3.00%	100	3.12
23	34	33.33%	57	55.88%	7	6.86%	1	0.98%	3	2.94%	102	3.16

*Question number corresponds with survey questions found in Appendix A

Within the context of classroom environment and management, the respondents reported that the college program taught them how to maintain a physical classroom environment conducive to learning. On the other hand, the respondents rated being empowered with other skills in this area less positively. The majority did indicate they had developed skills in using instructional time efficiently and in developing strategies to maintain learner involvement in instructional activities. However 13% and 16% respectively, suggested these skills were either not defined or not covered in their coursework. Further, more than a quarter of the respondents indicated that they were not provided with skills to identify learners who are off-task and redirect them or skills for developing strategies to communicate expectations for classroom behavior. Twenty one percent indicated that strategies for helping students to develop positive self-concepts towards learning were also not provided. At the undergraduate level, the psychology course, Behavior Modification (PSY 221) is offered and may address many of these skill areas. The course description states that the course examines the principles of operant, respondent and social learning with an emphasis directed at the application of these principles toward classroom management, behavior change and self-control. A similar course at the graduate level is outlined in the graduate catalogue. Guiding students to enroll in these courses might be encouraged. (Refer to Table 7, Classroom Environment and Management.)

Table 7
Classroom Environment and Management

Q#	SA	(%SA)	A	(%A)	D	(%D)	SD	(%SD)	NC	(%NC)	N	Wt. Score
24	26	26.26%	60	60.61%	4	4.04%	0	0.00%	9	9.09%	99	2.95
25	18	18.00%	66	66.00%	9	9.00%	0	0.00%	7	7.00%	100	2.88
26	23	23.47%	48	48.98%	16	16.33%	0	0.00%	11	11.22%	98	2.73
27	20	20.20%	53	53.54%	16	16.16%	0	0.00%	10	10.10%	99	2.74
28	25	25.25%	60	60.61%	10	10.10%	1	1.01%	3	3.03%	99	3.04
29	30	30.00%	49	49.00%	12	12.00%	0	0.00%	9	9.00%	100	2.91

*Question number corresponds with survey questions found in Appendix A

Although the respondents indicated that they were provided with the opportunity to develop effective written and oral communications skills, less opportunities for developing specific communications skills related to instruction were cited. This appears to represent a gap between developing instructional methods and articulating the sub-components of instruction. These sub-skills include: developing and delivering clear explanations, providing alternative explanations, integrating student responses or questions into the lesson and expressing students' progress throughout the course of a lesson. Oftentimes these sub-skills, which

require connecting theory to practice, come with experience. Some additional experience might be provided through case studies and micro-teaching activities which consciously emphasize these skills. (Refer to Table 8, Communication.)

Table 8
Communication

Q#	SA	(%SA)	A	(%A)	D	(%D)	SD	(%SD)	NC	(%NC)	N	Wt. Score
30	22	22.00%	67	67.00%	5	5.00%	0	0.00%	6	6.00%	100	2.99
31	21	21.00%	62	62.00%	10	10.00%	0	0.00%	7	7.00%	100	2.90
32	20	19.80%	61	60.40%	10	9.90%	1	0.99%	9	8.91%	101	2.81
33	17	17.00%	63	63.00%	12	12.00%	0	0.00%	8	8.00%	100	2.81

*Question number corresponds with survey questions found in Appendix A

Although the majority of respondents to the questionnaire indicated that opportunities to develop skills and appropriate procedures for assessing learners were provided, approximately 20% disagreed or reported that this was not covered in the coursework. This area received amongst the lowest weighted scores. Developing skills for constructing appropriate teacher made tests emerged as a concern as did developing the ability to monitor student progress during the presentation of a lesson. This reinforces the concerns cited in the area entitled Communication previously discussed. Also ranked in this area were the skills of using a variety of assessment techniques to assess learner performance and interpreting assessment data. The discrepancy in responses may be due to the fact that the study of tests and measurements is required at the undergraduate level but is only offered periodically as an elective at the graduate level. Half of the respondents to the survey reported that they were enrolled in a graduate program. (Refer to Table 9, Evaluation.)

Table 9
Evaluation

Q#	SA	(%SA)	A	(%A)	D	(%D)	SD	(%SD)	NC	(%NC)	N	Wt. Score
34	32	32.00%	43	43.00%	8	8.00%	0	0.00%	17	17.00%	100	2.73
35	19	19.00%	58	58.00%	10	10.00%	0	0.00%	13	13.00%	100	2.70
36	30	30.00%	49	49.00%	8	8.00%	2	2.00%	11	11.00%	100	2.85
37	32	32.00%	46	46.00%	6	6.00%	3	3.00%	13	13.00%	100	2.81

*Question number corresponds with survey questions found in Appendix A

General Questions and Perceptions:

Responses to questions related to alumni's overall views of the program were solicited. Under this section, it can be assumed that a response of not covered or not applicable (NA) indicates a non-rating. For example, students in educational leadership would not have been involved in student teaching as they are primarily practicing teachers. Further, graduate education students presently do not usually enroll in liberal arts courses. Due to the high number of NA responses in this section, weighted scores were not included. In addition, percentages were based on respondents who indicated involvement.

Over 92% of those responding agreed that the professional courses in education helped them to develop the teaching skills required to be successful in the classroom. Further more than 97% indicated that the field experiences were a valuable part of their teacher education program. Overall the majority (93.83%) responding to this question felt that the Castleton State College Education program did help them prepare for their present position.

In terms of their student teaching experience, more than 92% indicated that their cooperating teacher was competent and contributed to their professional training. However, only 65.76% reported that their student teaching experience was well planned and supervised by college faculty. The high ratings of the cooperating teacher would suggest that proper placements had been made. Nevertheless, some concerns might have arisen in the number of times supervision was provided. The state regulations changed during this review period to requiring a site visit once every 10 days. To compound the situation, during this same period, there was a high turnover in faculty and the number of students being served increased. At the present time the ratio of faculty to student teachers is 4:1. Hopefully the current student teacher ratio and the state emphasis on requiring site visits will reinforce the importance of clinical experiences.

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents indicated involvement with the liberal arts area. The majority indicated that their coursework in these areas provided adequate breadth and depth of content. In contrast, approximately 26% responded otherwise. The focus on fulfilling liberal arts requirements has dramatically increased in education in the last decade. Castleton now has in effect a requirement that all education candidates receive a liberal arts major prior to entering the professional teacher education program. In the future the consideration of an undergraduate general studies program may broaden the liberal arts foundation of the college wide curriculum. By the same token, a Masters in liberal studies may broaden graduate opportunities for teachers who feel they need enhancement in these areas. The potential of both of these programs has been discussed in the Education Department. (Refer to Table 10, General Questions and Perceptions.)

Table 10
General Questions and Perceptions

Q#	SA	(%SA)	A	(%A)	D	(%D)	SD	(%SD)	Applicable	(%Applicable)	NA	(%NA)
38	30	32.26%	56	60.22%	5	5.38%	2	2.15%	93	95.88%	4	4.12%
39	8	12.31%	40	61.54%	14	21.54%	3	4.62%	65	67.01%	32	32.99%
40	70	75.27%	21	22.58%	2	2.15%	0	0.00%	93	90.29%	10	9.71%
41	30	41.10%	18	24.66%	20	27.40%	5	6.85%	73	76.04%	23	23.96%
42	59	79.73%	10	13.51%	3	4.05%	2	2.70%	74	77.08%	22	22.92%
43	32	39.51%	44	54.32%	4	4.94%	1	1.23%	81	89.01%	10	10.99%

*NA = Non Applicable
**Question number corresponds with survey questions found in Appendix A

Analysis of Free Response:

Examination of the free response section of the questionnaire revealed participants' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the program. In addition, suggestions of areas which might be included to further strengthen the program were solicited. Greater than 80% of the respondents elected to provide a narrative response in the free response category.

Overall the responses to this section were diverse and often contradictory; contradictory in that one student's perceptions were sometimes in direct opposition to another student's perceptions. For instance, an alumni respondent cited that the education program was well defined while another respondent reported disorganization and inconsistency in the program. This phenomena makes it difficult to draw major conclusions based on consistent patterns in responses. Perhaps the phenomena emerged because during the time period under review (academic years 1984-85 to 1992-93), major turnover in faculty as well as changes in program regulations occurred. Only one education faculty member was in the Department during the entire period under consideration, while more than half of the faculty have been in the Department for less than two years. If it is to be believed that teaching personnel define a program, then changes in faculty would result in inconsistencies in respondents' perceptions of their experiences within the Education Department at Castleton State College. With this understanding, strengths and weaknesses were reviewed.

Reported Strengths:

By far, faculty contributions were cited by the alumni respondents as the greatest strength of the education program. Characteristics most often mentioned included knowledgeable, accessible and helpful, dedicated, professional and experienced. These comments are important because they demonstrate that the faculty are key to any successful teacher preparation program.

Small class size and low student-teacher ratios were frequently cited as a strength of the program. This created an atmosphere where individual personal attention could be provided; a characteristic that alumni appear to highly value. The convenience of the satellite center located in Springfield, Vermont, was recognized as highly desirable as it services the southernmost part of the state. Other general program strengths cited were providing a well rounded program and offering coursework which was relevant to the practitioner within the schools.

Student teaching as well as other clinical field work was also recognized as a strength of the education program. These experiences include early field experiences, case studies, methods, practicum, internships and student teaching experiences. Involvement in the public schools was specifically mentioned as were the Partnership Programs. Generally, the respondents appear to value a field based curriculum.

Finally, other strengths cited included providing opportunities for student collaboration in professional activities and providing reasonable access to resources such as the library. Easy registration procedures and helpful personnel in the Business Office and the Registrar's Office were highly valued. A more detailed list of strengths is outline in Appendix C.

Weaknesses:

Although there were several citations in reference to weaknesses of the program, no real definitive patterns emerged. Weaknesses were cited by the alumni respondents in terms of registration procedures and course scheduling. A lack of coordination between various offices was perceived by some of the respondents and two indicated frustration with the registration process in general. Six respondents indicated problems in course availability including time conflicts and canceling of classes due to either a low number of students or insufficient professors to cover the courses.

In the area of course content, several weaknesses were also suggested. These included the need for additional early field work, the lack of instruction in behavioral and classroom management techniques, the lack of training in IEP development and special education integration, and redundancy of course material.

In terms of the education program in general, four respondents cited disorganization in the Department and inconsistencies in responses to procedural questions. In relation to student teaching experiences, five cited concerns in regards to the supervision provided and three cited concerns over student teacher placement. Other respondents cited concerns over not being informed of the political realities of the workplace or being informed on the level of employment opportunities in the education marketplace. A detailed outline of reported weaknesses is presented in Appendix D.

Suggestions:

The greatest number of suggestions were given by respondents in the area of content covered in the academic coursework. These suggestions included providing more coursework in special education concepts such as IEP development, mainstreaming and evaluation of special education students. Further more focus on behavior and classroom management should be emphasized and more and earlier field work should be offered. The development of additional methods courses was also suggested. Courses in math/science methods, computing, whole language and interdisciplinary learning were specified. Other more unique responses included providing opportunity for field experiences at various age levels so students can identify where they want to teach, adding courses which cover such topics as poverty, neglect and abuse, and developing a mentor program with the schools.

In terms of overall program improvements, respondents provided many suggestions. Some suggested improving and expanding college school collaborative efforts including extending and supporting relationships to encompass a wider geographic area both to the north and south. Others cited the need to strengthen the liberal arts program, developing stronger standards for undergraduates and the need to develop a way to "weed" out students who should not be enrolled in a particular program. Others recommended that the department develop a 5 year plan and work towards becoming a team unified around the goals and objectives of the program.

In the areas of student teaching, six respondents suggested lengthening the experience, possibly to cover an entire academic year. One respondent suggested providing compensation to the student teacher. Other recommendations included improving communications between the schools and the college and insuring more supervision by college faculty.

In terms of course scheduling the following individual recommendations were made: opportunity to take two courses in one evening; the ability to take educational research and the graduate seminar in the same semester; requiring educational research to be taken at the beginning of the masters program; offering education research and the graduate seminar at a satellite site and scheduling longer class times but shorter in frequency during the summer session to accommodate students who travel some distance to the campus.

Finally, respondents made recommendations in the areas of support services. Primarily they suggested providing more guidance and assistance in career planning and placement.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Respondents to the survey were a small representation in comparison to the total population of graduates who were invited to participate in this review. Responses were received from approximately 35% of those surveyed. Therefore, possible bias generated by non-response of

graduates may exist. In addition, the large turnover in education faculty may have changed the nature of the program which may, in turn, have had an effect on the strengths and weaknesses identified in this study. Keeping these two caveats in perspective, the generalizations presented in this analysis may be helpful when planning for the future.

First and foremost, the greater majority of the alumni indicated that the specified competencies were addressed to some degree. Areas such as curriculum planning and developing skills in instructional methods as well providing skills to enable the growth of personal and professional characteristics were identified as being met. On the other hand, some concerns were identified in the areas of providing opportunities to develop classroom management and student evaluation skills. Also some concerns were raised in terms of providing skill development in the articulation of student progress and incorporating student responses into lesson revision. Faculty attributes and contributions were overwhelmingly cited as a strength of the program as were clinical experiences. Weaknesses were reported but no distinguishable patterns emerged. Course availability and registration procedures were cited as a weakness by a few respondents as were the report of some inconsistencies in Department actions. A variety of suggestions were made which again displayed no identifiable patterns. The inclusion of certain coursework pertaining to special education and behavior and classroom management was most often recommended. The addition of more methods courses and lengthening the student teaching experience were also suggested. Further strengthening college school collaboration efforts was proposed. Other individual recommendations were made and noted as they may contain merit when reviewing future Departmental plans.

With the recruitment of four new faculty members, many changes in coursework and in field involvement have come about. (A fifth new faculty member has been hired which may also impact coursework content.) This is evidenced by a new Student Teaching Handbook developed by the new Director of Student Teaching and several new syllabi developed by the other faculty. New coursework that involve such topics as learning styles, multiple intelligences, thematic planning, systematic design, portfolio assessment techniques and computer based education are now part of the program offerings. These offerings have all been designed around the Departmental theme: *Building Communities of Reflective Teacher Learners through Discoveries, Connections and Applications*.

Greater understanding and support for field based instruction is needed. As faculty struggle to meet their field commitments, advisement loads and traditional teaching loads must be realistically examined. Relationships between the public schools and the college must also be improved and rekindled. This may include looking at funding levels for honorariums, reestablishing Partnership agreements with a variety of school systems and engaging in mutually beneficial activities as equal partners.

Special assistance has been extended to provide advisement for out-of-state certification and excellent relationships have been developed with Certification Officers in adjacent states. As many of our students come from neighboring states, and collaborative agreements have been made with adjacent counties in New York, these extended services have been helpful.

Several of the perceived strengths and weaknesses identified through this survey, have been validated by our faculty and are being discussed. Many of the suggestions made within the context of this review are already being implemented. Others will be reviewed and based on feasibility and merit will be included within the Department's five year plan currently being developed.

CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The objective of this follow-up survey is to identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Castleton State College Teacher Education Program. Your response will assist us in making improvements to better meet the needs of our future students.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
Please circle the appropriate response or fill in the blank.

1. When did you graduate from Castleton State College?_____
   Semester Year

2. What was your program specialization?
   a. Elementary b. Middle School c. Secondary Education

3. What degree were you pursuing?
   a. BA b. BS c. Masters Degree d. CAGS

4. What was your major? _____ Second Major/Minor/Concentration_____

   What endorsement(s) were included on your certification/licensure?_____

5. What is your sex? a. Female b. Male

6. What is your age? _____

7. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

   a. Teaching and plan to continue

   b. Teaching, but plan to stop

   c. Not teaching, do not plan to teach

   d. Have not taught, but plan to begin

   e. Have taught, and do not plan to return

8. If you are not teaching, what are you doing?_____

9. If applicable, how many years of teaching experience do you have? _____

10. If applicable, have you ever had a student teacher?_____

11. Did you receive and respond to a CSC Education Department questionnaire in the Fall of 1990?

    YES NO

For each of the following statements, please circle the response that most closely represents your perception of knowledge and skills covered in coursework taught in the Castleton State College Program. Use the scale:

a strongly agree (SA)
b agree (A)
c disagree (D)
d strongly disagree (SD)
e not covered in coursework (NC)

Part I. The Castleton State College Program

A. Knowledge about Subject Matter and the Learner:
Castleton State College provided:

		SA	A	D	SD	NC
1.	an evolving knowledge of subject matter	a	b	c	d	e
2.	an articulated connection across disciplines	a	b	c	d	e
3.	the opportunity to learn about cultural diversity	a	b	c	d	e
4.	an understanding of the historical and social perspectives of education	a	b	c	d	e
5.	knowledge of learning theories to accommodate the individual learner and a diversified student body	a	b	c	d	e
6.	knowledge of human development	a	b	c	d	e

B. Personal/Professional Characteristics
Castleton State College enabled me to develop the skills necessary to:

7.	work in collaboration with other people	a	b	c	d	e
8.	communicate personal enthusiasm and stimulate learner interest	a	b	c	d	e
9.	communicate clearly through oral expression	a	b	c	d	e
10.	communicate clearly through written expression	a	b	c	d	e
11.	participate in professional organizations	a	b	c	d	e
12.	reflect upon my own teaching performance	a	b	c	d	e

Part II. The Castleton State College Education Program

C. Planning:
The Castleton State College Education Program enabled me to develop the skills necessary to:

13.	select and define appropriate learning objectives	a	b	c	d	e
14.	select and develop appropriate activities to meet specified objectives and learner levels	a	b	c	d	e
15.	integrate a variety of learning materials to meet specified objectives	a	b	c	d	e
16.	construct/create classroom materials	a	b	c	d	e
17.	develop daily lesson plans and long range unit plans	a	b	c	d	e
18.	successfully plan activities and assignments which address various learner differences	a	b	c	d	e

D. Instructional Methods

The Castleton State College Education Program enabled me to develop the skills necessary to:

		SA	A	D	SD	NC
19.	use a variety of instructional methods/approaches/ models	a	b	c	d	e
20.	match instructional methods with the needs of the learner	a	b	c	d	e
21.	present concepts and implement activities in a logical sequence	a	b	c	d	e
22.	use instructional aids, materials and media to enhance the delivery of a lesson	a	b	c	d	e
23.	be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances	a	b	c	d	e

E. Classroom Environment and Management

The Castleton State College Education Program enabled me to develop the skills necessary to:

24.	use instructional time efficiently	a	b	c	d	e
25.	develop strategies which maintain learner involvement in instructional activities	a	b	c	d	e
26.	identify learners who are off-task and redirect them	a	b	c	d	e
27.	develop strategies to communicate expectations for classroom behavior	a	b	c	d	e
28.	maintain a physical classroom environment which is conducive to learning	a	b	c	d	e
29.	help students develop positive self-concepts toward learning	a	b	c	d	e

F. Communication

The Castleton State College Education Program enabled me to develop the skills necessary to:

30.	develop and deliver clear explanations related to lesson content and instructions	a	b	c	d	e
31.	provide alternative explanations when learners misunderstand lesson content or instructions	a	b	c	d	e
32.	integrate student responses or questions into the lesson being taught	a	b	c	d	e
33.	be able to express to students their progress throughout the course of a lesson	a	b	c	d	e

G. Evaluation

The Castleton State College Education Program enabled me to develop the skills necessary to:

34.	to construct an appropriate teacher-made test	a	b	c	d	e
35.	monitor learner progress during the presentation of a lesson	a	b	c	d	e
36.	use tests, observations, interview, parents, pupil records and portfolios for assessing learner performance	a	b	c	d	e
37.	interpret a variety of forms of assessment data (an IRI, portfolio or standardized test)	a	b	c	d	e

Part III. General Questions and Perceptions

		SA	A	D	SD	NC
38.	Professional courses in education helped me to develop teaching skills required in my current position.	a	b	c	d	e
39.	Course work in liberal arts areas provided adequate breadth and depth of content.	a	b	c	d	e
40.	Field experiences in my education courses were a valuable part of my teacher education program.	a	b	c	d	e
41.	My student teaching experience was well planned and supervised by CSC faculty.	a	b	c	d	e
42.	At the local school, my cooperating teacher was competent and contributed professionally to my training.	a	b	c	d	e
43.	The CSC Education program helped prepare me for my present position.	a	b	c	d	e

Part IV. Free Response

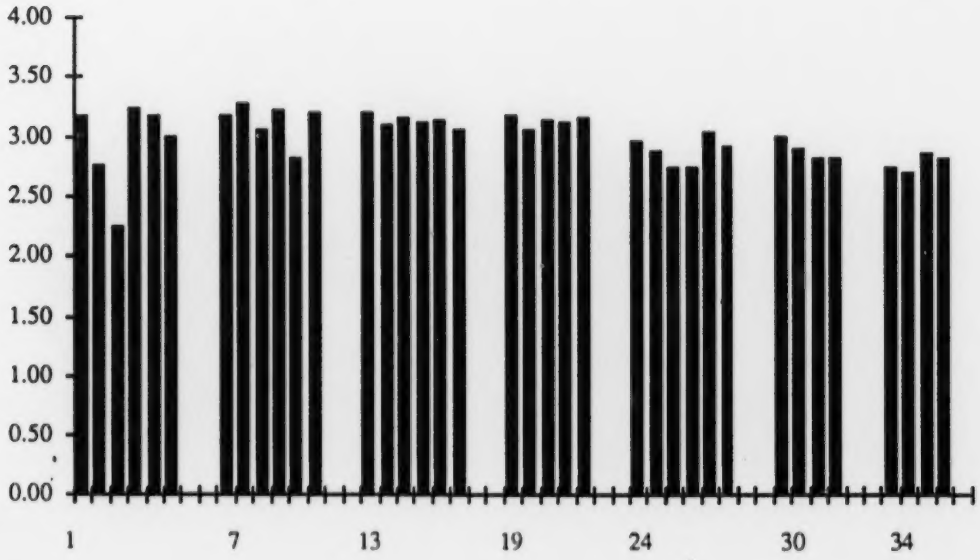
1. What do you perceive to be the strengths of the Castleton State College Education program?

2. What do you perceive to be the weaknesses of the program?

3. What suggestions would you make to strengthen the program?

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Castleton State College, Education Department, Woodruff Hall #36, Castleton, VT 05735 by August 6, 1993. Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Appendix B
Graphical Comparison by Weighted Score
Survey Questions 1-37



*Questions were rated on a scale of 0-4; 4 representing the highest possible value

Appendix C
Reported Strengths of the Program

Faculty Characteristics:
- Knowledgeable - competency in subject matter (11)
- Experienced/ real world practitioner (9)
- Good/excellent (8)
- Accessible/available/helpful (8)
- Caring (5)
- Dedicated/committed (5)
- Professional (5)
- Diverse styles/backgrounds (3)
- Enthusiastic (2)
- Friendly/understanding (2)
- Down to earth (1)
- High expectations (1)

Small class size, low student-teacher ratios, personal contact and individual attention (12)
Satellite center in Springfield in southern Vermont (4)
Well rounded program (3)
Comfortable atmosphere (1)
High and clear expectations (1)
Ability to individualize program helpful to non-traditional student (1)
Program similar to other graduate programs (1)
Coursework relevant/up-to-date to the teaching workplace (5)
Instructional methods courses (3)
Wide range of courses available (2)
Field experiences including early field experience, student teaching and other clinical work (17)
Involvement in public schools (3)
Partnership programs (2)
Supervision of student teaching experience (2)
Seminar during student teaching (1)
Opportunity for student collaboration (2)
Diverse student pool (by Vermont's standards) (1)
Castleton State College Leadership Association (1)
Library access and personnel (2)
Easy registration (1)
Helpful personnel in Business Office and Registrar's Office (1)

*(frequency of times cited)
**respondents may have cited more than one strength

Appendix D
Reported Weaknesses of the Program

Lack of coordination/ communication between offices dealing with registration (2)
Paperwork being lost (1)
Registration procedure in general (2)
Dealing with the Graduate Office (1)
Course availability (6)
Lack of satellite programs (1)
Travel time to Castleton State College (2)
Accessibility of faculty and college resources especially for graduate students (2)
Not enough field work/hands on experience (4)
Redundancy in coursework (3)
Lack of training in behavioral/classroom management techniques (4)
Lack of training in developing IEP's (2)
Not enough courses focused on special education integration (4)
Too many papers/student reports (2)
Lack of content on how to interact with parents (1)
Lack of multicultural consideration (1)
Elementary majors lack education towards early childhood (1)
Inadequate coursework on learning styles and assessment (1)
Unnecessary courses such as fundamentals of education (1)
Education research should be more practical (1)
No involvement in language arts class (1)
Disorganization and inconsistency among Education Department members (4)
No specialized program for middle level educators (1)
A gap between what is learned and how it is applied in practical setting (1)
Grade inflation (1)
Diminishing support for the Graduate Program (1)
Concerns related to supervision provided during the student teaching experience(5)
Inconsistencies in student teacher placement (3)
Lack of communication with student teachers (1)
Lack of interest by cooperating teachers (1)
Use of outdated teaching methods (1)
Courses not covering material during time allotted (2)
Many needed journals not available (1)
Lack of background in content areas and knowledge of education in global sense (1)
Not enough guidance for career choices (too many elementary certified) (2)
Not dealing with the politics of schools (1)

*(frequency of times cited)
**respondents may have cited more than one weakness

Appendix E
Reported Suggestions for the Program

More coursework in special education concepts (10)
More coursework in behavior and classroom management techniques (9)
More coursework and instruction on individual child development and learning styles (2)
More instruction on time management techniques (1)
More and earlier clinical/field experiences (9)
More coursework in specific disciplines (2)
Keep courses up-to-date and relevant (3)
Bring in working teachers and professionals (2)
More coursework in portfolio assessment (1)
Addition of more methods courses (2)
Inclusion of more math and science methods courses (4)
Inclusion of more courses focused on whole language/thematic (interdisciplinary) planning and process learning (5)
Inclusion of more courses on computing (1)
More courses in reading and more diversity in reading courses (2)
More courses in multicultural education (2)
More research and professional projects (2)
Offer more diverse classes focused on such topics as neglect, abuse and poverty (1)
Ensure that graduate courses include coursework different from undergraduate courses (2)
Provide more global experiences (1)
Include experiences at different age levels for students to see where they want to teach (1)
Place less emphasis on basics and more on reality (1)
Providing a common base of knowledge is important (1)
Provide closer monitoring of mid-term evaluations to insure course objectives are being met (1)
Continue to emphasize communication, dedication and diversity (1)
Provide more guidance in the area of licensure and out-of-state certification (2)
Become a departmental team and unify faculty on goals and objectives of the program (2)
Reach out to school districts; extend school college collaboration (5)
Put professors in schools to experience the real world of public education (1)
More guidance during entire program (1)
Include student in schools on a mentor basis (1)
Weed out students who should not be in a particular program (1)
Have stronger standards for undergraduates (1)
Strengthen the liberal arts program for elementary teachers (1)
Develop a 5 year plan (1)
Individualize programs to best meet needs of the students (1)
Spend less money on plaques and more on programs (1)
Strengthen communications and continue relationship with the Southern Vermont Educational Center (1)
Provide better library facilities in Springfield (1)
Include experimental/alternative education (1)
Develop more communications between student and college during student teaching (4)
Provide more supervision by college faculty during student teaching (3)
Improve student teaching (2)
Extend the student teaching experience; possibly to an entire academic year (6)
Provide compensation to the student teacher (1)
Provide opportunity to take 2 courses in one evening (1)
Require educational research at the beginning of the masters program (1)

Allow educational research and the graduate seminar to be taken in same semester (1)
Offer educational research and graduate seminar at satellite site (1)
Have class time longer but shorter in frequency during summer session (1)
Student with learning disabilities should be graded with other means (1)
Organization in helping students pinpoint needed classes (1)
Assist students in career planning and job placement (5)
Provide on-campus educational work sites - day care or after school programs (1)

*(frequency of times cited)
**respondents may have cited more than one suggestion

An Analysis of Alumni Perceptions Towards Attainment of Outcome-Based Competencies in Teacher Education

by Dr. David R. Murray,
Castleton State College

Abstract

This project is a summative report of a follow-up survey of approximately 300 alumni from Castleton State College. Alumni perceptions towards attainment of outcome-based competencies in teacher education were reported. The report included demographic information, employment information and quantitative findings. The quantitative data reported respondents' knowledge about subject matter and the learner, professional characteristics, planning, instructional methods, classroom environment and management, communications and evaluation. Analysis of strengths and weaknesses as well as conclusions and recommendations are included. The greater majority of the alumni indicated that specified competencies were addressed. Some concerns were identified in the areas of classroom management and student evaluation skills. Reporting skills on student lesson revision were cited as weaknesses. Strengths and weaknesses cited in the survey were validated by the Castleton faculty. Changes are being included in a five year development plan.

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